

THALASSEUS FORRESII: Gould.



THALASSEUS TORRESII, *Gould.*

Torres' Tern.

Thalasseus Torresii, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 140.

Mair-id-bo, Aborigines of Port Essington.

In the collection formed by Mr. Gilbert at Port Essington were two examples of this new species, respecting which he says, "This bird is numerous on all the sandy points in the harbour as well as all round the coast and the neighbouring islands; and I am informed that it breeds on the sandy islands during the months of April and May:" beyond this I have no information to communicate except that I possess examples killed at Madras in the East Indies, whence I infer that its range extends from thence throughout the islands of the Eastern Archipelago to the northern coasts of Australia. It is intimately allied to the *Thalasseus Pelicanooides* and *T. poliocercus*, which it doubtless resembles in its general habits and nidification.

The stomach is membranous and the food consists of fish.

The sexes are alike in plumage; in summer the forepart of the head is black, while in winter it is white.

Forehead, sides of the face and neck, upper part of the back and all the under surface silky white; feathers of the crown and surrounding the eye white, with a minute spot of black in the centre of each; occiput and back of the neck black; back and wings deep grey; tail grey; primaries greyish black, broadly margined on their inner web with white; the shafts white; irides dark brown; bill ochre-yellow; feet blackish grey.

The Plate represents the bird in the summer and winter plumage, of the natural size.